

## COUNTRY USSR

SUBJECT      Evaluation of Soviet Medical Book  
                 on Cardiovascular Disease

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BOLEZNI SERDCA I SOSUDOV by L I Fogel'son, / Cardiovascular disease /  
(Izdavatel'stvo Akademii Meditsinskikh Nauk SSSR, Moscow 1951)  
863 pages. 7

1. This particular volume is the third edition of this work. As I remember it the first edition appeared in the early 1930's and the second shortly before World War II. Both these earlier editions presented a relatively short survey of cardiovascular physiology and pathology, each containing only about 150 pages, in contrast to this third edition which has almost 900 pages.

2.

remember very well that an old professor in Moscow whose name	I
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I have forgotten [redacted] "Be careful, Dr Fogel'son may be a treacherous enemy. He is closely connected with the Kremlin." I also learned at this time about Fogel'son's rapid rise in medical circles based not on his only mediocre scientific activity but on the efforts of influential men in the Kremlin. In connection with his scientific background, I should mention that his earlier publications did not impress me at all. It is interesting to note that in spite of his close relationship to Kremlin medicine and his consequent involvement in the complicated political scene in the Kremlin, he managed to avoid any political difficulty even during the well-known doctors' purge in 1953. This purge, incidentally, resulted in the arrest of Fogel'son's old teacher Prof Vassily F Zelenin. Zelenin is a very valuable man, strongly anti-Communist, a well-known cardiologist who was one of the pioneers in the field of EKG. His earliest work in this field dates from before World War I but terms originated by him are still used in US medicine. Zelenin was about 75-80 at the time of his arrest in 1953. As far as I can recall he was not involved in Kremlin medicine except perhaps as a consultant. In any case Fogel'son, although relatively unknown, suddenly became a full professor and a leading Soviet scientific star during the early 1930's.

3. It is not surprising that the preface to this third edition is very servile and closely reflects the Communist Party line. Following the preface the first three chapters, about 100 pages, are concerned with the anatomy, embryology, histology and physiology of the cardiovascular system. It is a very detailed survey, sort of compilation of the work of many men in this field. Fogel'son quotes many relatively recent non-Soviet sources, particularly US scientists like Robb White, Clomset and Ungerleider. Some of the publications cited are dated as recently as 1945. Fogel'son appears to avoid citing German and French sources but he reports on results of scientific activity in these countries without mentioning the scientists involved. As far as Soviet authors are concerned some are quoted and some aren't. Presumably this is because of the fact that many Soviet scientists who would normally be cited in a work of this sort were not in political favor. Needless to say, the name of the famous Soviet cardiologist Prof Dimitri Pletnev, who is well known in the US and was arrested in 1937, is not mentioned at all. As far as content of these early chapters is concerned the only thing that struck me is that post-World War II scientific accomplishments in the field of the anatomy and physiology of capillaries are not mentioned at all although the book was published in 1951. This work was done in several countries, particularly the US.
4. The fourth chapter is devoted to the pathology of circulation. In this chapter Fogel'son furnishes a detailed description of Pavlov's theories but actually is unable to interpret these theories from the point of view he attempts to. In other words, he cannot ascribe to them any circulatory abnormalities. It is not surprising that he also quotes Lenin, Stalin, and Engels in this chapter without any particular reason. This chapter seems to me to be much more controversial than the earlier ones. It does not cover the literature in the field and contains a number of statements which, although probably true, are not backed up by experimental evidence.
5. Chapter five is a routine description of the various methods of cardiological examination. Chapters six and seven treat the influence of social environment, age, sex, nutrition, work, constitution etc on the activity of the heart and vessels. Surprisingly enough in this particular discussion the author does not emphasize any particular Communist point of view except in that part dealing with constitution in which he ardently defends Lyсенко.

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6. Chapter eight is a routine description of different kinds of arrhythmia. The only interesting topic discussed in this chapter is a description of the mechanism of the dying of the heart. This description is partially based on original contributions of Fogel'son himself. He does not, however, quote the contributions of other men in this field, chiefly German.
7. Subsequent chapters are concerned with a routine description of various cardiovascular diseases. Fogel'son uses the strictly anatomic classification system of these diseases based on rather obsolete German patterns. It is peculiar that questions of treatment are dealt with in only a few sentences except for the treatment of hypertensive diseases and myocardial infarction which are considered at some length.
8. Chapter 15 furnishes a very superficial description of the interrelationship between cardiovascular disease and the pathology of other organs. Also described in this chapter in a very superficial way is the so-called "neurosis" of the heart.
9. Chapter 17 discusses the ability of cardiac patients to work. This chapter is nothing but a lot of Communist nonsense.
10. The final chapter is concerned with the prophylaxis and treatment of heart disease in general. It is a kind of very superficial primitive description of the fundamental aspects of the problem which are well known to students of medicine in any country. I should mention that dicumerol treatment is apparently widely used in the USSR. The following vitamin preparations are recommended: thiamin, nicotinic acid and ascorbic acid. Surgical methods of treatment are described on only two pages. A relatively large section of these two pages is devoted to the removal of thyroid in cardiacs. Fogel'son's opinion is rather reserved as to the effects of this treatment. He also describes Blalock's operation and ligature of ductus botalli. He mentions sympathectomy and cardiolysis only briefly. No operations on the heart itself are described. Recommended by Fogel'son as valuable medicine in the treatment of hypertensive disease are alkaloids derived from salsola richteri and sphaerophysa salsula. Both of these latter were isolated in the USSR. Surprisingly enough Fogel'son does not describe the effects of anti-biotics on subacute septic endocarditis despite the fact that this treatment is very popular in the USSR.
11. My conclusions in regard to this book can be summarized as follows:
  - (a) This very large book could be greatly reduced in size with good results.
  - (b) The theoretical aspects of cardiovascular disease are described much better than proper clinical aspects. In this connection Prof Fogel'son is very familiar with all the fine points of electro cardiography and appears to be a good specialist in this field but is not on the whole very good on clinical cardiology.
  - (c) If this book is compared with the previous Soviet treatises on heart diseases by Prof Pletnev in 1932 and by Prof Lang in 1939, it would be concluded that the earlier books are much more valuable. Lang's book for example is on the same level as any US or European cardiological works.
  - (d) Fogel'son furnishes a large bibliography of Soviet publications but this list is not complete for the reasons mentioned above. He also gives a rather large list of non-Soviet sources but his choice is rather haphazard. He prefers to quote older authors especially those in the 1920's and early 1930's.

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